

Declaration of the City of La Antigua Guatemala: Responding to the root causes of displacement and strengthening partnerships and integral responses for the protection and solutions for displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs in Central America and Mexico

La Antigua City Guatemala, November 30th, 2021

The member States of the Regional Comprehensive Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS), Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, gathered at the Fourth Annual Meeting under the auspices of the Pro-Tempore Presidency of Guatemala, with the purpose of reviewing national and regional progress and challenges, coordinating regional and national responses aimed at mitigating the root causes of displacement, provide effective responses to the protection needs of displaced populations, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs as well as the search for durable solutions.

Recalling the commitments established in the declarations adopted in the framework of MIRPS of San Pedro Sula, Mexico City and the city of San Salvador and in the Omnibus Resolution adopted at the 51^o Ordinary Period of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights particularly in the sections “i. Protection of human rights against the COVID-19 pandemic” and “xv. Protection of asylum seekers and refugees in the Americas”.

Reaffirming the consolidation of MIRPS as a key framework for cooperation in the region to respond to humanitarian and protection needs, and as an effective implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in the areas of governance, prevention, protection, support for the resilience of displaced persons in host communities, as well as strengthening asylum systems, protection and advancing long-term solutions to displacement in the region.

Expressing concern on the challenges of human mobility in the region of persons with different needs and profiles that may include asylum seekers, refugees, migrants in irregular situation, returnees and displaced persons with protection needs, unaccompanied and separated, girls, children and adolescents, family units, victims of trafficking in persons, persons subject to migrants smuggling, women and persons in vulnerable situations who require comprehensive support, addressing their needs, and measures aimed at protecting their rights and addressing their needs.

Recognizing the work and leadership of MIRPS member states in the working groups on internal displacement, labor market access and vocational training, and local governance, and the round tables on strengthening asylum systems, organized by the MIRPS Support Platform, with the assistance of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), which have allowed the exchange of knowledge, experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Highlighting the need to implement a whole of society approach to displacement, and international protection, which includes actions by the MIRPS member states, the members of the MIRPS Support Platform, civil society, the private sector, academia, international organizations, international cooperation and other relevant actors.

Highlighting the contribution of new strategic partners of MIRPS, such as agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations (ILO, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR) that have participated as advisers to the working groups on local governance, access to the labor market and vocational training, as well as other regional mechanisms, among them, the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), and complementarity with the Comprehensive Development Plan for the North of Central America and Mexico, led by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which contribute to the work and coordinated support for displaced populations, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs.

Highlighting the fruitful collaboration of the MIRPS Support Platform and, in particular, the Kingdom of Spain and the Government of Canada during their respective presidencies; for the demonstrations of solidarity, technical and financial support received during the “Solidarity Event” of June 10th, 2021 organized by Spain, Guatemala and Costa Rica; and for their participation during the round tables on reception and admission, reflecting the spirit of collaboration, burden-sharing and shared responsibility reaffirmed in the Global Compact on Refugees.

Reaffirming the need to continue to promote actions of regional and national scope to respond to displacement and international protection, based on international, inter-American and national policy frameworks and standards applicable to the commitments of the Global Compact on Refugees and the principle of shared responsibility.

WE AGREE TO:

1. Reaffirm the commitment to continue strengthening the asylum system and complementary protection, as well as the principle of non-refoulement, including the prohibition of direct and indirect refoulement and the prohibition of border rejection of persons in need of international protection.
2. Stress the importance and validity of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as the main international instruments for the protection of refugees, consistent with the norms and standards of the Inter-American System of Human Rights, in accordance with the internal regulations of each country.
3. Continue to strengthen the asylum capacities of national institutions responsible for the determination of refugee status, promoting a working model based on: 1) the optimization of mechanisms for identifying persons with international protection needs, 2) biometric registration, digitization of files and the use of computer systems for the digital management of asylum applications; 3) the establishment of triage mechanisms and accelerated, simplified, merged and

special procedures for refugee status determination with protection safeguards, as applicable; 4) group determination of refugee status or use of a presumption of inclusion as applicable, or as appropriate to the humanitarian situation prevailing in the country of origin; and 5) the promotion of digital identity and the implementation of appropriate measures for the interoperability of asylum systems with civil registration systems, as applicable.

4. Promote a coordinated and collaborative response to the challenges posed by mixed and successive large-scale migratory movements in the region; ensure protection sensitive entry mechanisms that favor the identification and proper reference of asylum seekers, refugees and other protection needs; and strengthen reception mechanisms, differentiated processes and procedures for the attention of the various profiles of person on the move in search of protection, implementing information and awareness strategies aimed at the protection and prevention of discrimination and xenophobia.
5. Strengthen, in line with the actions of the Working Group on Internal Displacement, cooperation and exchanges of good practices in regulations, institutional policies and national coordination mechanisms for the protection and the search for comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the situation of displaced persons or at risk of displacement, including efforts to improve evidence and case management and care.
6. Strengthen, under the leadership of the National Technical Team of each State with the support of the Technical Secretariat of MIRPS, the coordination with humanitarian, development and financial actors, the private sector and civil society, the implementation of the MIRPS National Action Plans, according to the national legislation of each country as appropriate.
7. Implement actions that reflect the national and regional context to prevent displacement, taking into account its root causes, in collaboration with the international community, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society, using existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.
8. Promote the complementarity of the international protection statutes adopted in the region, including refugee, asylum, stateless and supplementary protection and temporary protection statutes or those arising from regularization processes, in order to facilitate, and expand inclusion and access to solutions for persons with diverse protection needs, in accordance with international human rights law, international refugee law and applicable inter-American standards on the subject.
9. Develop durable, dignified and sustainable solutions for displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs, in conjunction with host communities, aligning humanitarian assistance, processes, plans, policies, social, protection and national development programs, including measures aimed at integration, return, resettlement, reintegration, and socio-economic inclusion to increase their resilience.

10. Continue to adopt measures and mechanisms to combat manifestations of violence, xenophobia and stigmatization against asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs.
11. Promote actions for the inclusion of displaced persons asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs in national, subnational and local development policies and plans, social protection policies and programs, response and recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a comprehensive protection approach, humanitarian assistance and socio-economic inclusion.
12. Expand partnerships with municipalities and local governments to strengthen support in strengthening local governance, promoting participation, and exploring opportunities to extend access to essential and complementary services, and economic opportunities to displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs.
13. Call on the international community to make contributions to the Fund for voluntary contributions to the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework, as a fundraising tool within the framework of the OAS to support the objectives in the implementation of the activities of MIRPS, for the strengthening of this regional mechanism.
14. Explore opportunities with the MIRPS Support Platform to convene an international solidarity event that provides financial support and technical cooperation for the implementation of national plans of action, and consider options for advancing resettlement, education scholarships, private sponsorship, training, twinning programs among others, on a bilateral or multilateral basis or as voluntary contributions to the MIRPS Fund of the OAS.
15. Recognize the contributions of civil society and the private sector in the region to protection and solutions for displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs, exploring opportunities for synergies in the implementation of the commitments defined in the MIRPS National Plans.
16. Continue to promote regional cooperation, collaboration and solidarity through Working Groups, such as spaces for information exchange, good practices and joint strategies to address the common challenges and comparable needs of displaced populations, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and returnees with protection needs, to provide a comprehensive regional response to the challenges posed by the movements of persons seeking international protection.
17. Strengthen the generation of data on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the National Plans of MIRPS, in order to make progress and persistent gaps visible, so that the international support and contributions of the strategic partners of MIRPS can be better targeted.
18. Thank UNHCR and the OAS for their support as Technical Secretariat of MIRPS, under the leadership of the Pro-Tempore Presidency, and for their continued efforts to generate a joint regional workspace that strengthens regional cooperation; in addition, call for continued support



and monitoring in the implementation of national and regional responses, through the exchange of good practices and lessons learned.

19. Recognize the leadership and management of the Third Pro-Tempore Presidency of MIRPS by the Government of Guatemala and thank the Government of Canada for holding the Second Pro-Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform.
20. Welcome the Government of Honduras as the new Pro-Tempore Presidency of MIRPS.